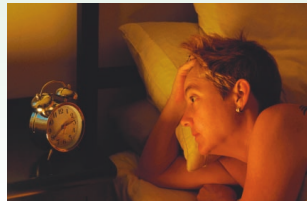


The

Insomnia

Insomnia is a condition in which you have trouble falling or staying asleep. Some people with insomnia may fall asleep easily but wake up too soon. Other people may have the opposite problem, or they have trouble with both falling asleep and staying asleep. The end result is poor-quality sleep that doesn't leave you feeling refreshed when you wake up. Most adults (over 70%) experience insomnia or sleeplessness at some point in their lives.



How common is insomnia?

Insomnia is very common and can affect people at any stage in life. One recent study reported that 1 in 5 children suffer from insomnia. According to the National Sleep

Foundation, almost two-thirds of older adults are regularly affected by sleep problems, and up to 14% frequently use sleeping pills.

Who gets Insomnia?

Several factors increase a person's chances of developing insomnia:

- Gender. In general, insomnia is more common in women than men. However, older men have more disrupted sleep than older women.
- Age. As a person ages, sleep becomes more fragmented. Complaints of insomnia are much more frequent in people over age 65 than in younger individuals.
- Medical conditions and medication. People who have medical conditions that cause pain or discomfort (e.g. arthritis, fibromyalgia, stomach ulcers), are more likely to get insomnia. In addition, insomnia is a side effect of many common medications, including over-the-counter

medicines that contain caffeine.

- Childhood fears. One study found that people who had experienced long-term insomnia had been prone to nightmares and fear of the dark as children.

- Lifestyle. People who travel frequently and cross time zones, as well as night-shift workers, are at higher risk. High caffeine intake, internet addiction, smoking and/or the overuse of alcohol or other stimulants can also contribute.

Types of Insomnia

The different types of insomnia include:

- Transient (short term) insomnia lasts from a single night to a few weeks.
- Intermittent (off and on) insomnia is short-term, and happens from time to time.
- Chronic (on-going) insomnia occurs at least 3 nights a week over a month or more.

Chronic insomnia is either primary or secondary. Primary insomnia is not related to any other health problem. Secondary insomnia can be caused by a medical condition (such as cancer, asthma, or arthritis), drugs, stress or a mental health problem (such as anxiety), or a poor sleep environment (such as a bed partner who snores).

How is Insomnia diagnosed?

Insomnia is not a disease, and no specific test can diagnose it. Diagnosing a sleep disturbance and its cause is the most important step in restoring healthy sleep. The diagnosis of insomnia is made by a physician based on the patient's reported signs and symptoms. The doctor relies on the patient's report of a problem falling or remaining asleep. It can be useful for the patient to keep a daily record for two weeks of sleep patterns, food intake, alcohol consumption, medications, exercise, and any other information recommended by their physician.

Treatment

Treatment for insomnia focuses on the reason(s) why you don't sleep well. If you have a medical problem, such as chronic pain, treating that problem may help you sleep better. You may also be able to sleep better after making some lifestyle and behavioral changes, such as:

- Go to bed at the same time each night
- Get up at the same time each day
- Avoid caffeine or alcohol for several hours before bedtime
- Regular exercise
- Avoid daytime naps

Some people may need to take medication to help them fall asleep. Doctors often prescribe medicine for a short time if other treatments are ineffective. But medicine doesn't work as well over time as lifestyle and behavioral changes. Most sleep medications also carry the risk of becoming habit-forming. Medicine works best as a short-term treatment combined with lifestyle and behavior changes.

Charlottesville Medical Research, in conjunction with Dr. Joseph David, is currently conducting a research trial for insomnia. If you would like more information about this study, please contact us at (434) 817-2442 or visit us on the web at www.cvillemedresearch.com.

By: Evonne Hancock, CNA, CCRC

70%

of all American experience insomnia symptoms at some point during their lifetime

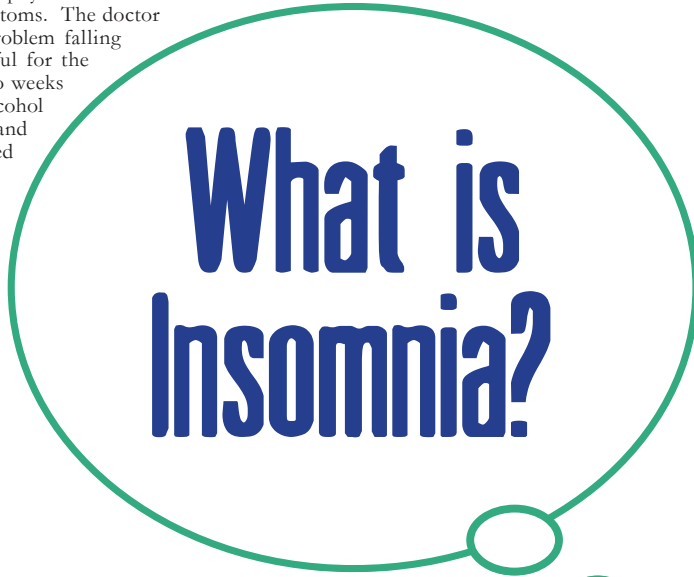
100,000+

police-reported car accidents are caused by drowsy drivers each year

40 million

Americans suffer from chronic sleep disorders

(Source: National Sleep Foundation)



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